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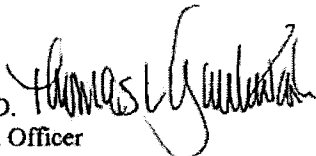
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January 25, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D. 
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON PILOT PROGRAM TO DIVERT PATIENTS FROM OVERCROWDED
COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS TO PRIVATE HOSPITALS**

This is to provide you with an update of the pilot program to divert patients from overcrowded County Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) Departments, to private psychiatric hospitals, as outlined in the November 4, 2004 Board Letter requesting authorization to implement the plan for the relief of the County Hospital Psychiatric Emergency Services, and as approved by your Board on November 30, 2004.

This pilot program was funded at \$400,000 and is expected to operate from February through June 2005. The Department of Health Services (DHS) convened a number of meetings with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to establish the details of the pilot program. For the purposes of this pilot program, DHS will only work with private psychiatric hospitals that hold current contracts with DMH and are in good standing, and will use the Board approved DMH indigent rate for these hospitals. Furthermore, DHS will utilize the County Code 2.76.530 (Emergency Transfer or Maintenance of Patients) authority to enter into agreements with these psychiatric hospitals on a per patient basis, following the procedures established by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the transfer of medical trauma patients under County Code 2.76.530.

DHS further met with the leadership of the Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) to discuss the pilot program, and has scheduled an orientation meeting at HASC for all interested psychiatric hospitals, that hold a DMH contract and are interested in participating in this program. The orientation meeting will be held on February 3, 2005, at 8:30 AM, with the pilot program phase-in expected to start the following week.

DHS is very excited about this pilot program and believes it will be one of several important measures to decompress the chronically overcrowded County Hospital PES.

TLG:PP:rs

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Department of Mental Health